

**U.S. Department of Justice**

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*Eastern District of Virginia*

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced the sentencing today of Rahamtalla H. Elasha of Cumberland County, Virginia, to 21 months in prison by United States District Judge Henry E. Hudson. Elasha is a citizen of The Sudan.

Elasha and his wife, Rita S. Modi, were indicted by a grand jury sitting in Richmond on May 6, 2003, on charges of Health Care Fraud in relation to their business, Countryside Wheelchair Transit, a non-emergency medical transportation company which transported Medicaid-eligible patients to and from medical appointments and adult day-care facilities. Elasha plead guilty on June 23, 2003, to defrauding the federal Medicaid program and the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services of over \$414,000.00 by over-billing for the transportation of patients. Modi pled guilty to Misprision of a Felony and was sentenced on October 3, 2003, to three years probation. Both Elasha and Modi were ordered to make full restitution and Elasha was ordered deported after he completes his sentence.

McNulty said: "This is a significant fraud against the citizens of the US and Virginia. Not only did the defendants cheat the government but they also took money away from the patients who rely on this assistance by doing so."

The sentence was also announced by Donald W. Thompson, Jr., Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richmond Field Division.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and by the Virginia Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. Assistant United States Attorney Gregg R. Nivala prosecuted the case for the U.S. Attorney's Office.

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